Brandon Caires     - Theodore Roosevelt

Mustafa Raza        - Booker T. Washington

Megan Hinchcliffe  - Cornelius Vanderbilt

Erika Marko           - Upton Sinclair

Stephanie Sales     - Susan B. Anthony

Progressive Era Dialogue

Theodore Roosevelt - Hello everyone. Welcome aboard my private jet on its round trip to Africa. I think we should all give a little background on ourselves. Do you feel that you are a progressive?

Susan B. Anthony - I am a progressive woman because I believe greatly in women’s rights. I have co-founded a group called National Woman Suffrage Association. I worked for the passage of the federal amendment for women to vote. I believe that women should be treated just the same as men. We are just as deserving and should be given the equal opportunity to do the many things that they have the privilege of doing. For instance we should be able to get the same amount of education, and we should be allowed to state our opinion, by voting.  
  
Theodore Roosevelt - I understand where you are coming from Susan and I feel that if the people are to be served than it is incumbent upon the President to orchestrate the initiatives that will be to the peoples benefit and the nation's welfare. This makes me truly a progressive. Cornelius, what about you?  
  
Cornelius Vanderbilt -  Well, I’m an entrepreneur, successful in the shipping and railroad businesses. I was also once a lawyer and believe that things should stay the way they are, my family was very wealthy, they were the best, eliminated competition, and I wish to follow their example.  
  
Booker T. Washington - Hi, I am Booker T. Washington the founder of the Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute in Alabama and believe that all African Americans deserve political and civil rights.  
  
Upton Sinclair - Hello, as President Roosevelt knows, I am Upton Sinclair and I am a socialist who “did well at school and at 14 entered New York City College” (Spartacus Educational page 1). I also wrote the book The Jungle which exposed the unsanitary and humane conditions in the meat packing industry. President Roosevelt i know you then ordered a thorough investigation on the meat packing, even though you seemed to disagree with the way i encouraged my socialist views.  
  
Theodore Roosevelt - You are right Sinclair. You showed me that something in society needed to be changed and I knew it was my duty to fix that problem. People needed a change, they wanted reform.  
  
Upton Sinclair-  And Mrs Anthony i fully agree with your views on women’s rights. I helped my wife write her autobiography Southern Belle: A Personal Story of a Crusader's Wife which were sonnets about growing up as a women in these times, she even wanted it to be published in my name.  
  
Susan B Anthony- I read that book, and i completely agree. Although, i wish she published it in her name, and maybe put you as a co-author; because if it was her idea she should be taking credit for it. Just because shes a woman doesn’t mean she can’t write her own book.  
  
Upton Sinclair- As much as I do agree with your argument, she felt that with my publicity, due the my former books, the book would become more successful  and then her point would become well known.  
  
Susan B Anthony- Good point, I never thought of it that way. Your wife's book is just another step closer to fixing our society. There are so many things we still need to change, and women’s suffrage is just one step closer. President Roosevelt should help improve not only women’s rights but also African American rights. Everyone deserves to be treated as equals and then everything else will flow from there, like improving the I.C.C. and businesses.  
  
Cornelius Vanderbilt - I disagree.I believe the people and our society are perfectly fine the way they are. The New York and Harlem Railroad, the NY Central and Hudson River Railroad, and the Grand Central Depot are running smoothly, the shipping industry, such as the canal across Nicaragua is running well, which makes things easily transported and the people can now get their supplies and goods. Read my excerpt in the Scientific American Magazine, I was “captain of Gibbons steamboats from 1818-1829.” (Scientific American Magazine, pg.1)  
  
Theodore Roosevelt - Cornelius, you are absolutely right but where in the constitution does it say that laws cannot be created. If I feel a law is in the best interest of our country, then I will declare it. Besides, as president, I am of equal power to the other branches of government. No president, besides Andrew Jackson and Abraham Lincoln,  has exercised their executive  powers as an equal branch of government. I will rightfully stand by the constitution and do what I feel is necessary for this country.  
  
Susan B Anthony- The Constitution needs to be changed!! Mr. President, i agree with you and I'm happy that you are willing to compromise to make everyone happy, but we’re still not even close to being fixed as a nation.  
  
Cornelius Vanderbilt - Well I believe in the idea of the “self-made man”, as I always say “The Pubic Be Damned.” We don’t need your help or input, man himself and the country itself is doing fine and will always be fine without your help and interference.  
  
Susan B. Anthony - If the government didn’t interfere and people never stepped up to protest then, this country would get no where. We need radicals who are willing o do everything they can for their cause. Like Washington and I, we both want equality of rights!  
  
Booker T. Washington - I agree with Susan, as the leader of the the Tuskegee Institute it is my job to ensure that by getting a great education we as African Americans can further ourselves in society. After presenting my Atlanta Address I became the spokes person for the African American community and with it I take complete responsibility in ensuring that all African Americans earn equal rights.    
  
Theodore Roosevelt - I appreciate what you and Anthony are doing for peoples rights, but I seem to keep picking on you Cornelius...let me ask you. Do you feel that there wasn’t a need for me to pass laws like the Meat Inspection Act or the Pure Food and Drug Act? “The Jungle” written by our friend Upton here, specifically pointed out all of the dangers of the food industry. Without these laws or that book, who knows what you would be eating right now. I think you are being a little too self-centered.  
  
Cornelius Vanderbilt - Even though you may all think I’m self-centered and haven’t achieved much for the people, I put in place the Gibbons vs. Ogden case, running ferries through NY and NJ, played a part in the California Gold Rush, moving from regional steamboats to ocean-going steamships, increasing my businesses, and survived the Panic of 1873. I do agree with the Meat Inspection Act and the Pure Food and Drug Act. What have you done Susan?  
  
Susan B. Anthony -  I have done many things for women’s rights, but not only for them. I have participated in many civil rights movements for African Americans. I’ve visited 54 of 60 counties of New York, asking women to sign a petition that supported legal rights for married women.I have also worked on the prohibition law, and have organized many meetings for women and others. I always arranged for the guest speakers, and have paid out of my own pocket to have most of these things done. I wouldn’t expect you to do that Vanderbilt, considering you only really care about yourself, and as long as you're happy.  
  
Upton Sinclair - Vanderbilt, I’m happy to know that you agree with the Food and Drug Act because i wanted my novel to prove that even though I am not a politician i can still get a law changed. And, i really hope that this can inspire novelists to go out and make a difference. Washington, I know you must feel the same way about inspiring people.  
  
Booker T. Washington - I do feel that I have also inspired many through my novel Up From Slavery which talks about my struggles of being a slave and how i worked my way up to open the Tuskegee Institute. Getting a great education at Hampton University made me the proud spokes person of the African American community. Even though Du Bois does not believe that a great education is what is best for our community he still knows that civil and political rights need to be established.      
  
Upton Sinclair- It’s so great to see your success and optimism. It reminded me of the time i almost became the Governor of California but there were some last minute political errors on my part. And, even though i was constantly criticized harshly by the democrats i still proceeded to run int he election, and to my surprise it was generally pretty close.   
  
Cornelius Vanderbilt - Well I don’t know how you’ve all got in the positions your in now, but I’ve done many things to get to where I am now. I started off by borrowing 100 dollars from my mother to purchase periauger, I competed on the Hudson River against other steamboats creating a monopoly between NY and Albany, and got to know and hang out with the right people to get the support I have now.  
  
Susan B Anthony- I started publishing my radicals newspaper entitled *The Revolution*. Stanton and i allied with George Francis Train. The motto was: Principle, not policy; justice, not favors. Men, their rights, and nothing more: Women, their rights and nothing less. Unfortunately the paper didn’t go very far, and i only ended up getting myself in a debt of ten thousand dollars, but i was able to pay it all back by myself.  
  
Booker T. Washington - I feel that in order for my community to get further in society we must sometimes sacrifice our rights to get a “industrial” education and focus more on the accumulation of wealth. Starting out from nothing an really working my way up i was able to help and increase the education of many by getting large amounts of donations to my schools.  
  
  
Susan B. Anthony -  I always say "It shall be my work this evening to prove to you that in thus voting, I not only committed no crime, but, instead, simply exercised my *citizen's rights*, guaranteed to me and all United States citizens by the National Constitution, beyond the power of any State to deny.”  
  
Cornelius Vanderbilt - That sounds good and all, but who benefits from that?  
  
Theodore Roosevelt- Well, what does it matter Cornelius? You don’t care who benefits. All you care about are the big powerhouses running industry. With all due respect, at least  the rest of us care for the well being of everyone. I can’t stress that enough.    
  
Cornelius Vanderbilt - Well I’ve helped other steamboat and railroad companies/owners, people of the community, people associated with me, and I even took out my competitors to weaken the competition, benefiting myself.  
  
Upton Sinclair- I’ve noticed you’re selfish trend and that is exactly what I have been trying to get people to realize in my novels. There is so much corruption in the major industries because they are so egocentric and are willing to sacrifice other people for their success. And i simply can’t come to and understanding with you.   
  
Booker T. Washington - Yes i have also noticed that Cornelius, you have not stopped talking about your accomplishments. I still have not seen any contributions from you that benefit the community. Look at the president that is all he has done so far during his presidency, help out the people.   
  
Theodore Roosevelt -  Thank you for acknowledging Washington, I’ve helped to weaken the trusts of big companies giving the smaller guys an equal chance to prosper in society.   
  
Cornelius Vanderbilt - I’ve had control of the Accessory Transit, started the line of Panama, and created greatly achieved businesses and it all relates to other things of this age. Wealth, popularity, Carnegie, Rockefeller, Social Darwinism, “survival of the fittest”, and many others, so from my point of view I am truly successful and proud to be who I am, don’t you agree Theodore?  
  
Theodore Roosevelt - Oh Cornelius, I don’t think you get it. Yes, you are very successful. But what is it that you are so proud about? You are driving the smaller businesses out of business because you want the big guys to keep control. How is that fair? At least I can say I made reforms for the “best interest” of our country. When the miners went on strike, I was the one to figure out how to give the workers more pay for shorter working days. I do what is right for everyone, not just the big guy.   
  
Booker T. Washington - I think that we should not get so frustrated over each others beliefs and should just enjoy our meeting in Africa.  
  
Susan B. Anthony - I agree, and for this meeting we all shouldn't fight about our issues with each other. Lets just stand for what we believe in, and back up our president.  
  
Cornelius Vanderbilt - We should get going now, our plane is about to land, get ready for a great meeting!

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